

2002

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Roerig, Cindy, "A preferred vision for administering elementary schools : a reflective essay" (2002).
Graduate Research Papers. 1412.
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A preferred vision for administering elementary schools : a reflective essay

Abstract

I believe in visionary, instructional, organizational, collaborative, ethical, and political leadership in administering a school community. I know all students can achieve quality education if the right accommodations are developed for each learning situation. Administrators need to promote educational excellence for all stakeholders. As an administrator, I will promote and advocate for a school community where all students will learn and achieve lifelong knowledge and skills so they can become future leaders in our society. I believe educators must be held accountable for every student to reach their maximum potential in achieving academic and social success. As a principal, my focus will be ensuring that each and every student will learn and achieve at his or her highest potential.

A PREFERRED VISION FOR ADMINISTERING ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling,

and Postsecondary Education

University of Northern Iowa

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

by

Cindy Roerig

May 2002

Entitled: A PREFERRED VISION FOR ADMINISTERING ELEMENTARY

A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

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I believe the administrator of a school is the leader that promotes excellence in education for all stakeholders. This includes students, staff, families, community, business partners, and school officials. Not only is teaching and learning emphasized but I feel administrators should maximize the opportunity to create a school where students know they are respected and valued. Principals must be committed to excellence and to accountability to their students and their community. Success will be achieved if a safe and comfortable environment is established where an administrator is committed to achieving the highest quality of education for their students and district. Schools need to be learning communities where students learn, think, and solve problems.

An administrator must keep their focus on the whole expected role of exhibiting leadership in a school setting as well as in the community. The community must play a major role in the learning process and continuous success of a school. As a leader, I believe administrators need to be accountable for ensuring students obtain the knowledge, skills, and citizenship that are desired to contribute in today's society. It is crucial that principals exhibit knowledge of teaching strategies, curriculum, diversity of a population, and facility operations to be considered effective in their performance. Effective administrators must be fully aware of instructional best practices and be able to model these practices in the classrooms.

High academic standards should be expected, valued, and rewarded by an administrator. Concise and clear communication to all constituents of a school setting should be common practice for a successful administrator. The leadership role is the most important attribute of a desired and effective administrator. An effective leader models essential learnings which includes knowledge and appreciation of basic skills, the

ability to process a wide variety of thinking skills, exhibiting high attributes in personal qualities and interpersonal qualities. High expectations that are developed and implemented create a learning and teaching environment where all students have the maximum potential to achieve academic and social success for a productive and rewarding future.

Motivation for learning is important for a principal to model in their leadership role. No student is unmotivated and it is the job of educators to find the strategy that best fits each individual student. If students feel valued, they will be motivated and will work and do their work well. Learners need the attitude that they want to learn. Students will perform for teachers and administrators that are respected. A principal must model that academic success is satisfying and that they are truly concerned for each student and staff member.

The principal of a school must be able to lead restructuring to obtain the highest level of academic achievement. Building communities where meaningful and successful teaching and learning occur is vital for educating urban students. Developing learning communities includes the principal interacting on a daily basis with all stakeholders to allow involvement and participation in working to advance the quality of learning in urban schools. The role of administrators should be redesigned to assist them in shaping their attitudes and values.

Visionary Leadership

I believe an administrator should exhibit and model visionary leadership. "Vision unlocked is energy unlocked" (Barth, 1990 p.151). This leadership should be used to facilitate the success of student's learning and should be supported and shared by all

stakeholders. "Vision exists when teachers participate in the creation and maintenance of the school's vision" (Cunningham &Cordeiro, 2000 p.340). Visionary leadership should be displayed and promoted by the administrator and clearly defined in the overall school district vision and mission statement. Reaching this goal would provide an effective partnership between the school board members, administrators, teachers, parents, and would accomplish the desire for better-educated students. "A school without visions is a vacuum inviting intrusion" (Barth, 1990 p.152). A visionary principal engages all stakeholders in analyzing the current status of a school and listens to them on how they believe the current status of the school fits into the vision of the future. "Becoming a leader is an act of self-invention. As a visionary leader, I must imagine myself as a leader, act as if I'm a leader until I actually become one" (Monroe, 1997, p.126).

As a visionary leader, I would outline a nonthreatening setting for modeling the school vision and mission statement for all stakeholders. "Schools have to offer students a common goal that they can all work toward together within a structure that supports a positive sense of belonging" (Aronson, 2000, p.122). In developing a school as a learning community, as principal I would consider myself the head learner. I believe visionary leadership engages all stakeholders in developing a community of learners. School visions need to be carefully monitored and regularly evaluated to make sure the vision is appropriate for the diversity of a school population. On a daily basis, the visionary leader of a school must analyze the current development of the vision. Plans can jointly be developed by negotiating specific issues important to various parties. Inclusion of all society members is vital for shaping a unified school vision. "Leaders behave in ways that motivate and inspire those around them by providing meaning and

challenge to their followers' work" (Barnett, McCormick, Connors, 1999, p.26).

Principals must enlarge the circle of people for effective change. Barriers need to be identified and addressed so all students have the ability to become successful adults. All who hold stakes in the outcome should be included in shaping restructuring movements. The school vision and goals should be clearly communicated to all stakeholders of a school district and community. I believe accomplishments of students and staff should be acknowledged and rewarded when effective work of the school vision is exhibited. Sharing visions in a learning community will help develop enormous personal satisfaction in job performance.

"The premise should be that the principal is the central figure from which restructuring models for schools can originate and through which they are implemented" (Thomas, Fitzhugh-Walker, Jeffries, 2000, p.54). As a principal, I would assume the role of a transformational leader and exhibit a collaborative effort in a restructuring process.

"Certainly, principals need to review current practices to ensure participation, so that faculty may assess ownership and understanding of the restructuring process" (Kochamba & Murray, 2000 p.3). I believe in collecting and studying data to obtain information in developing an implementation plan for achieving school goals. "School reform works best when policy makers give educators clear objectives and an environment in which objectives can be reasonably achieved" (McAdams, 2000, p.257). I would promote educational programs and teaching strategies that are relevant to continually achieving school improvement. Part of restructuring educational programs would be encouraging teachers to take risks in changing to an effective delivery process. I believe imagination and creativity are excellent attributes of qualified educators. "It is the quality of the

relationships in the classrooms that determine the educational value of the setting” (Wilson & Corbett, 2001, p.122). Principals need to know their community, staff, and students. “When teachers begin to see the potential power in their positions and accept challenges instead of seeing just problems, then positive change will occur.” (Thomas, Fitzhugh-Walker, Jeffries, 2000, p.18).

Instructional Leadership

I believe an administrator should exhibit and model instructional leadership. Part of this responsibility includes modeling life-long learning which includes studying effective leadership styles. An administrator must be knowledgeable in curriculum requirements, design, and implementation plans. I think an instructional leader also needs to be aware and promote extra-curricular activities so programs are being provided that meet the needs of all students. The role of instructional leader for a principal in my view is the most important role of being the leader of the school.

Some educators say “all children can succeed... if they make an effort;” others say “all children can succeed... if only the parents would help;” and still others, fewer in number, assert “all children can succeed... and it’s my job to make sure they do” (Wilson & Corbett, 2001, p.117).

As an instructional leader, my goal is to ensure everyone is doing his or her job in facilitating student success. I know it is necessary for educational programs to be evaluated to ensure that all at risk, minority, special needs, and all students meet instructional goals in all curriculum areas. Students learn in different ways so teaching strategies need to include different instructional approaches to accommodate a variety of student intelligences. I believe success for all students is achieved by reviewing curriculum standards and adjusting programs and teaching strategies to accommodate all types of learners. “Success for all students, then would require school-wide attention to

the quality of their instructional experiences, including students' relationships with their teachers" (Wilson & Corbett, 2001, p.93). Also, an administrator needs to be aware of resources available so accommodations can be developed to meet the needs of students and families in their community. I would promote multiple opportunities to be incorporated into a school setting so there would be a variety of offerings that match student need. "Concern for students must be the foundation of all instructional planning" (Gunter et al. 1999, p.3).

An effective instructional leader must be knowledgeable in analyzing school data. Data analysis enhances strong academic schools. Uncovering solutions to schools' problems can be accomplished by using data to show where a school has been in its educational goals, where the school is now, and where the school should be. Utilizing information obtained through data will allow a principal to prepare for the future and make better decisions about what instructional strategies need to be changed. The use of data can make an enormous difference in obtaining and directing instruction for the highest possible level of student achievement.

I firmly believe an administrator needs to be an advocate for the success of student learning and should do so by modeling the importance of learning. As an instructional leader, I would develop school culture where all educators are continual learners. "Without adults (principal, teachers, and staff) who are committed to continuous inquiry and learning, a school will not create the environment for learning for students" (Speck, 1999, p.34). My school would be considered as a community of learners. Effective leadership encourages teachers to talk, cooperate, and organize cooperation between classrooms instead of teaching in isolation. "Effective instructional leadership integrates

collaboration, peer coaching, inquiry, collegial study groups, and reflective discussion into a holistic approach to promote professional dialogue among educators” (Blase & Blase, 2000, p.137). Educators must be provided time and opportunities for reflective conversations among peers. Principals must promote continual growth of staff and encourage teamwork and collegiality among educators.

When adopting new programs, an instructional leader interprets and analyzes. Besides academic programs, I think staff development should be created with the goal of promoting positive student outcomes. I feel it is imperative that all staff take responsibility and be held accountable for developing programs that incorporate respect and celebrate diversity. “Our goal is to connect new learning with existing knowledge, thus building upon a foundation of strength and familiarity” (Thomas et al. 2000, p. 19). Opportunities and allowing time for reflecting on what was learned must become a daily practice in schools.

Technology use should be implemented so all stakeholders have easy access to the evaluation or progress of a school vision. Partnerships between the community and the school should be developed when considering instructional needs. I believe an administrator needs to maintain a direct involvement in the success of student learning and promote constant evaluation for improving student achievement. As a principal, I believe it is important to be in every classroom everyday. Students need to see the principal supporting the instruction that is taking place. Exhibiting updated knowledge in curriculum expectations is a desired characteristic of an effective administrator in my opinion.

I believe that principals must support teachers in participating and utilizing staff development. Students benefit academically when teachers observe, examine, question, and reflect on their own style of teaching. As a principal, I would involve staff members in designing what staff development activities would best benefit our school. A principal must also participate in the staff development courses and model the strategies learned in the classrooms. Teachers need to see the principal modeling instructional leadership.

Instruction needs to be a cognitive process. It is time to move away from teacher directed learning and move towards the teacher as the facilitator of learning. "Children are "apprentices in thinking"; knowledge and ways of knowing grow out of interactions with others" (Bruning, Schraw, Ronning, 1999, p.233). Students learn best when they are active participants in their learning and are allowed to reflect on their learning. Teachers should ask for students' input in designing projects for the curriculum. I believe students utilize higher order thinking skills when working cooperatively with other students and the results produce better problem solving skills and higher academic achievement. "The exchange of ideas among students from high, medium, and low achievement levels, handicapped or not, and different ethnic backgrounds enriches their learning experiences" (Morgan, 2000, p.3). In my principal role, I want students to be aware of what they know, to monitor their learning, and I want students to learn strategically. Gaining knowledge is a constructive process that involves how learners build and organize knowledge. The role of an instructional leader is to coach, demonstrate, and model learning.

When modeling instructional leadership, a principal must be aware that every classroom has children with special needs. I believe education should be offered in a

least-restrictive environment. Emphasis on inclusion can benefit all children's growth and development. Inclusion does not only mean students with special needs, but extremely gifted students as well as the wide variety of instructional levels of students. "Even among children who are not identified as having special needs, there are many factors that cause a wide variety of development in children of the same age" (Gunter, Estes, Schwab, 1999, p.8). Not only do schools educate children academically, but also they educate students physically, socially, and morally.

Organizational Leadership

I believe an administrator should promote and model organizational leadership. The principal is the manager of the school learning community and to be effective as a manager, a principal must exhibit strong organizational skills. An organized principal will have the time needed to accomplish the multiple tasks required to meet the mission and goals of a school. Dependability is a required attribute of an organizational leader. Exhibiting the knowledge of a school's operational procedures will ensure a productive and orderly learning environment. Effective communication of these procedures and policies develops quality education. Including all stakeholders in decision-making opportunities provides shared responsibility and creates ownership to maximize accountability. "Effective management helps a school achieve its goals, in part by making the school function well enough to allow the leadership role of the principalship to emerge" (Speck, 1999, p. 69). A well-managed school environment enables students and staff to reach optimum learning opportunities.

I feel decisions must be made with the realization that all outcomes effect teaching and learning. A school environment must feel caring, comfortable, and safe to support enhanced learning. "Caring is foundational, the source of community and the ground of our humanity whatever our gender, race, or ethnicity" (Lyman, 2000, p.12). The staffs at school buildings need to utilize an effective use of space to accommodate all types of learners. Educational working conditions must be conducive to learning. Principals need to take into account the needs of students and teachers when deciding on the amount of space needed to effectively meet the educational goals of the school. Technology should be used as a tool for developing resources that meet the needs of a school vision. Also, technology can be an important tool in communicating with parents. A principal must be proficient in technological skills because of the advances in learning beyond the classrooms using computers in the twenty-first century.

Communication skills are an important component of being an organizational leader. Effective communication about potential problems and concerns should be addressed immediately. "Always put people first, paper second" (Monroe, 1997, p.194). Immediate response to concerns by a principal demonstrates a showing of deep concern for individuals. Resolutions should be developed in a timely manner and the outcome should result in attainment of shared decisions affecting the school.

I believe and administrator should be knowledgeable in the fiscal resources and the human resources functions of a district. As a principal, my job is to monitor and direct the school's daily operations and overall environment. A principal must carry out multiple tasks in a day, so they need to exhibit strong organizational skills. "If you are working in a dispirited or ineffective organization, realize that you as a leader will have

to be the first staff person to believe that quality and excellence are possible with the staff you have” (Monroe, 1997, p. 149). The effectiveness of a principal as an organizational leader will determine if the school will run effectively and efficiently.

The budgeting process of a school is an important element in smooth organizational leadership. Skills need to be acquired in planning, formulating, administering, and evaluating the school budget. A budget will determine as a principal what type of educational programs and resources can be offered at a school. I believe the budget should be developed to enhance academic achievement. Remembering to allow expenses to improve technology in tight budgets is a challenge for principals. Technology plans must be developed to foster students’ learning needs. “Foundation and government agencies often make special grants available for schools to buy or lease computer-related equipment” (Speck, 1999, p.203). A principal must be aware of available grants to help obtain needed equipment on limited means.

An organizational administrator should be knowledgeable of the collective bargaining process governed by statute. “The respective rights and powers in public collective bargaining are circumscribed by constitutional constraints at both the state and federal levels” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p.867). I believe as a principal, I must develop a listening and working relationship with all bargaining units.

Educational support personnel are a vital component to a sound educational delivery process. Treating all subordinates as professionals is important to model as a principal. A principal should appreciate and respect all educational support employees in demonstrating organizational leadership. Dialogue and interaction between all groups of a school setting and the principal are vital for establishing a quality school learning

environment. An effective principal should make every effort to know all names of the people that enter the school. A principal requires a variety of communication skills in working with individuals and groups to reach the ultimate goal of a unified school vision.

With the upcoming predicted teacher shortage, an organizational leader needs to be aware of the critical issues facing a district. High academic standards and performance expectations must be clearly stated in a school vision. Attainment of school goals must be supported in dealing with the management of school operations. An administrator must earn the respect of the faculty and community to be an effective leader. "If learning is grounded in emotions, then surely learning is best supported by leaders grounded in caring who influence and contribute to emotionally positive school environments through relationships embodying engrossment, action, and reciprocity" (Lyman, 2000, p. 119). Accepting responsibility for one's own actions should be promoted as an opportunity to achieve positive change. Confidentiality should be enforced in a well-managed school. I believe efficient and effective management styles will promote the best educational strategies that accommodate the diversity of all students. I think communication, problem solving, resolution, and listening skills encourage a good working relationship between management and workers. A positive learning environment will be sustained and a safe respectful school setting is achieved by an organizational leader.

Collaborative Leadership

I believe an administrator should promote the importance of collaborative leadership in achieving academic excellence. I think the principal needs to initiate the idea of inviting parents and community members to become partners in the learning process at the school. I believe involving parents in designing new programs will booster support

for the programs and is a key element to the success in improvement of student academic achievement. It is my opinion that if family members are not involved in reform, the more likely they will be to undercut the progress of reform. Including the school, business partners, community, and family members will provide a partnership in impacting education. All of the school community should feel comfortable in contributing thoughts and ideas to a school vision. Collaboration, commitment, and collegial processes will help to promote the sense of a learning community. Families must actively take on the role of partners with educators to achieve the highest academic standards for students. "Schools have to offer students a common goal that they can all work together, within a structure that supports a positive sense of belonging" (Aronson, 2000, p.122).

I think technology and media can be utilized to showcase the teaching and learning that is going on in a school setting. "Technology will be a major supporting tool for all learning, and students will work on projects through distant learning with other students and professionals at diverse locations" (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2000, p.70). In working with the media, a principal needs to take a proactive approach to develop a nonadversarial relationship. Community resources can be secured and used to solve school problems. With the budget cuts that are happening in today's society, an urban school principal must seek out additional resources for school improvement such as neighboring colleges or universities. Including the public and keeping them informed will help to maintain funds that are necessary to run school operations. Cooperation between community and schools provide a way for collaboration to be used effectively to promote positive change. "When students pay attention to one another, cooperate with

one another, and share their knowledge with one another, they gain respect, understanding, and empathy for one another" (Aronson, 2000, p.170). I think the perception of public schools can be improved when a community feels welcomed and informed about a school's progress.

I think that in today's society, there needs to be an outreach for community services as well as educational programs offered. I believe community needs and services must be integrated into school visions and goals. Business leaders of the community need to be involved in schools and form partnerships to better education. "Business volunteers have made a significant difference in many schools" (McAdams, 2000, p.258). I feel the role of schools should be visible in developing a relationship with the community and business partners. Along with business partnerships, a principal should seek out adult volunteers from the community. Some students need more personal attention in school than it is possible for one teacher to accommodate. I believe that volunteers and mentoring programs are very effective in assisting these student needs. Establishing partnerships with all stakeholders will only strengthen the bond between community and public schools. Creating these partnerships enriches school missions and visions, which I believe is vital to achieving student success.

The diversity of a school population must be celebrated and valued. School facilities need to be part of a whole comfortable community environment. Multicultural displays should fill the school. Schools need to be an inviting place for the community to want to enter. Classrooms and hallways should be inundated with displays of students' work. "School should not reflect what society is, but rather school should model what society should be" (Monroe, 1997, p.193). School buildings need to be accessible for all

stakeholders and should be a focal point when planning neighborhood development.

Personal involvement and commitment enhance tax issues, and continuing pride and involvement when there are no longer school-age children in the homes/neighborhoods.

A principal should be accessible to the community at all times. Principals must leave their office and interact directly with people daily. I believe in efficiently run schools, principals are visible and are there to listen to all stakeholders. By listening to concerns, sharing in the learning process, sharing joys, and solving problems will help establish a sense of a learning community. "The process of becoming a more caring school may begin with formal restructuring, including site-based management, shared decision – making, and parent involvement" (Lyman, 2000, p.125).

Ethical Leadership

I believe an administrator should display ethical leadership in promoting the success of all students. I feel professional codes and ethics should always be practiced by administrators. In shaping a school community, a principal must establish a school culture that respects teachers, students, and community members. An ethical leader is aware of the social and cultural backgrounds of all of their students and how these factors affect student's learning. Trust must be earned and established by an ethical leader.

Stakeholders must have confidence in the leader of their school community.

Trustworthiness includes modeling honesty, kindness, listening, integrity, and fairness.

Qualified and equitable leaders are the right things for schools. The principal and teachers need to work together for the service of students. Working together will enrich the school learning environment. An ethical leader needs to be an advocate for all students no matter what their background, diversity, family, handicap, or shortfall may

be. "More children are growing up in households in which both parents work outside the home, or in households headed by a single, working mother" (Chase, 2002, p.5). I think the role of a leader is to promote the rights of all students to be treated equitable and receive quality education. Equity not only includes the physical and financial aspects of a school, but most importantly an ethical leader ensures equity for all students in their educational outcomes. I feel an administrator must exhibit a respecting role in dealing with ethical issues. A principal should know their core beliefs and be consistent and fair in dealing with daily interactions in the school.

I believe there needs to be a move to return faith in public education. School districts must promote the wonderful things that are happening in their schools. Principals in their leadership roles need to remember to listen to others and be accountable for their own actions. I feel decisions must be made with the awareness of the impact on others. The community and families need the freedom to share problems and concerns without being afraid of what might happen. A principal must exhibit a solid background of honesty and ethical behavior. Many ethical dilemmas from a variety of stakeholders will become a part of a principal's everyday role. I believe in dealing with potential problems, an administrator needs to be able to identify all the people who will be affected by the outcome. "How we think and what we believe help to form the foundation from which we live our lives and interact with others" (Thomas et al., 2000, p.26). I feel the role of education is to educate everyone and to be accountable for that task.

I believe the community and staff will learn from a principal's actions. A principal must model courtesy in working with the community, staff, and students. A courteous principal listens to what people have to say, and they do not judge or criticize. "Courtesy

is the core of how a lead-manger deals with workers, which sets an example for everyone” (Glasser, 1998, p.125). I think respect should be expected, exhibited, and rewarded in a school setting. Expectations must be clearly stated and understood by all stakeholders to ensure respect. Principals must be consistent and fair in enforcing behavioral expectations. “Principals have the authority to mandate classroom actions, but their power to reward and punish can undermine the chance to nurture and coach” (Zimelman, Daniels, Hyde, 1998, p.218). An ethical leader understands the importance of leadership in promoting educational excellence. I feel ethical leadership must be a constant attribute of an administrator.

Political Leadership

I believe an administrator should exhibit political leadership to promote quality education. “Schools are in the middle of the political arena” (McAdams, 2000, p.260). I feel the community values the opinions of educators in political issues concerning education. A school environment should include ongoing discussions with a representative of diverse community groups in shaping quality education. “Schools are where all the ills and divisions of American society are put under a looking glass” (McAdams, 2000, p.260). Because of this, principals must be knowledgeable about political issues concerning education today. I think the public influences the needs and the directive schools initiate to achieve positive teaching and learning. It is the role of the principal to communicate trends and issues affecting schools to the public.

It is my belief that it is imperative that principals are knowledgeable about school district policies and procedures and shares this knowledge with their staff.

Communicating policies to parents and students is the role of the principal and can be

accomplished by writing the district policies in the student handbook. Included in the handbook should be mission statements of the school, academic goals, academic requirements, general school policies, specific behavior expectations, and board of education policies. "Administrators need a comprehensive knowledge of both education and law to make judgements" (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2000 p.340).

A principal must establish written policies on student records and how parents may access these records. A principal in complying with student record policies should maintain the highest regard of confidentiality.

I believe a principal has a role to return faith in public education, especially in urban school environments. Administrators need to be advocates for their school as well as their school district. I believe it is extremely important for the success of a school to establish a positive relationship between administrators and the school board. Leadership must ensure the school board that policies, laws, and regulations are adhered to so desired outcomes and goals are achieved. "Educational leaders have learned that they must have board support if they or their initiatives are to weather the heat that accompanies almost every decision" (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2000, p.126). The principal must make sure accommodations are being addressed to meet the needs of an ever changing diverse student population. I feel a positive and caring school environment is achieved by including all stakeholders in decision-making processes that affect student outcomes. Becoming knowledgeable and involved in decisions will create the sense of ownership and will produce positive perceptions by society. Including representatives of all stakeholders on a task force to study recommendations might be another good way to establish ownership and pride in the school community.

I think a principal needs to communicate to their staff the importance and impact political issues have on our schools. I believe there are many important relationships within a school and I think the relationship between teachers and the principal is the most vital for ensuring quality education. Teachers communicate with the public on a daily basis so this principal and teacher's relationship will affect community support on educational issues. There needs to be collaborative support between the community and the role of the school. I think the importance of diversity should be considered in discussing political issues. In my opinion, I feel the effectiveness of the education in society impacts the economic stability needed for productive schools. The future of our society is affected by the job public education achieves in our youth. I believe an administrator must be a political advocate to ensure positive changes in education that promotes success of all students.

Conclusion

I believe in visionary, instructional, organizational, collaborative, ethical, and political leadership in administering a school community. I know all students can achieve quality education if the right accommodations are developed for each learning situation. Administrators need to promote educational excellence for all stakeholders. As an administrator, I will promote and advocate for a school community where all students will learn and achieve lifelong knowledge and skills so they can become future leaders in our society. I believe educators must be held accountable for every student to reach their maximum potential in achieving academic and social success. As a principal, my focus will be ensuring that each and every student will learn and achieve at his or her highest potential.

A principal must keep abreast of the latest trends and strategies in education. They must model the role of being a continual learner. Principals must constantly read and analyze research data so the academic focus of a school will be on comprehensive improvement for the entire learning community. Community members must have the principal accessible at all times. Concerns and communications need to be addressed in a timely manner. A principal must be willing to put communication at the top of their priority list. Communicating with all stakeholders will assist in making good decisions and will create ownership in solutions for implementing change. Willingness to institute and lead reform will continue to make schools better for all students, teachers, staff, and neighborhoods. Inspiring students, teachers, staff, and community members is a desirable attribute of an effective leader to exhibit. Along with inspiring, acknowledgement and recognition of good work by students and staff is the responsibility of a nurturing and respected administrator. Recognition has a positive impact on student achievement in my opinion. In order for a school community to achieve success, there must be a safe, caring, and comfortable environment. This environment has to be lead by an effective principal.

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